

CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION  
U.S.D.A. Forest Service  
Closure Order for Wildfire Suppression  
George Washington and Jefferson National Forests  
Lee, James River , and Eastern Divide Ranger Districts  
Hardy County, West Virginia,  
Shenandoah, Rockingham, Page, Alleghany, and Craig Counties, Virginia

Decision

I have decided to issue a closure order for the areas affected by the following wildfires that are part of the Easter Complex: Shipwreck, Wolf Gap, Alleghany Tunnel, Rich Hole, and Barbours Creek. These fires are located on the Lee, James River, and Eastern Divide Ranger Districts. The order prohibits the occupancy and use by the public of these areas during the time while fire suppression activities are conducted. The order applies to any public use activities including hiking, biking, hunting, fishing, and camping. The purpose of this order is to protect the safety of the public and the firefighters working in the area.

This action falls within Category 1 (Forest Service Handbook 1909.15 (Environmental Policy and Procedures Handbook), (Section 32.12, WO Amendment 1909.15-2010-1 36CFR 220.6(d)(1)), which states "Orders issued pursuant to 36 CFR Part 261 - Prohibitions to provide short-term resource protection or to protect the public health and safety." Based on this category, it is my determination that this action is categorically excluded from documentation in an environmental impact statement or an environmental assessment. I find that there are no extraordinary circumstances present that might cause this action to have significant effect upon the environment.

Purpose and Need

This Order provides Forest Service law enforcement officers an instrument with which to protect the safety of forest users and firefighters.

Public Involvement

Scoping on this project included the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries and discussions within the agency to identify any extraordinary circumstances or other environmental concerns.

Finding Required by Other Laws

The restrictions set forth in this closure order are consistent with management objectives set forth in the Land and Resource Management Plans for the George Washington and Jefferson National Forests. The Federal lands have been examined, and it has been determined that the proposed closure is also in compliance with the following:

Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended.

National Historic Preservation Act of 1969, as amended.

Executive Order 22988 pertaining to flood plains.

Executive Order 11990 pertaining to wetlands.

A civil rights impact statement is not required for this action because adopting a temporary closure from the CFR does not require an EIS or otherwise fit the categories for which a civil rights impact statement is required. Further, this action is temporary, limited in scope, and imposes no additional restrictions on the public which are not already imposed by State Law. (FSM 1731, FSH 1709.11)

Implementation and Administrative Review

Pursuant to 36 CFR 215.12, this action is not subject to a higher level of review. Implementation of this decision may begin immediately.



MICHAEL L. BALBONI  
Acting Forest Supervisor



Date